

knew that they would have to unite and incorporate as a city. On January 28, 1963, the citizens of Vista voted to incorporate. The Vistans made the right decision and since its incorporation, Vista has experienced an enormous amount of growth and change. Today, Vista is a community of nearly 90,000 residents.

The people of Vista have always had a strong sense of tradition, family-values, and a value for diversity. For these reasons I chose Vista as the place to raise my family and the ideal place to grow my business. Vista is a community that has successfully linked culture, education, and commerce. Vista hosts a variety of community events year-round and enjoys an award winning public school system. Vista's business-friendly reputation and centralized location between Southern California's trade centers makes it attractive to businesses.

Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of the city of Vista's 40th year of incorporation, I would like to personally thank all the citizens and community leaders that have molded Vista into the community it is today. I wish the citizens of Vista good fortune and continued success in the future.

THE VACCINE INJURY COMPENSATION PROGRAM

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2003

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, in 1986, Congress established the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, a no-fault compensation system that provided for quick and fair recovery for those who experience injuries related to a vaccination. It assured that victims would not have to go through long and expensive litigation with uncertain recovery.

Unfortunately, plaintiffs' attorneys recently began to seek ways around the administrative compensation program created by the act. They are trying to somehow distinguish injuries related to ingredients in vaccines from the vaccines themselves. The courts have uniformly rejected these attempts to circumvent the statute. It is the claimants, however, that suffer. Rather than receive the expedient compensation to which they are entitled under the vaccine program, they are drawn through a lengthy court proceeding—ultimately just to find themselves required by the court to file a claim under the no-fault system. Claimants do not lose any rights in this system because as a bipartisan coalition of the Congress set it up, claimants who are not satisfied with the compensation award through the program can then opt to proceed to traditional litigation.

The vaccine ingredient provisions in the Homeland Security Act sought to clarify current law and ensure that claims for all vaccine related injuries go through the vaccine program. Unfortunately, that purpose has been

misconstrued in the media due to the manner in which the provisions came to be in the Homeland Security Act. I support the repeal of the vaccine injury provisions to allow for further discussion and explanation of these measures. These measures did not change existing law and their repeal should not be seen as an attempt to change existing law.

TRIBUTE TO TOM CONNELL

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2003

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Florida's most cherished and dedicated civil servants, Tom Connell. Tom will be leaving our office at the end of the month to begin his much-deserved retirement and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for all he has given and wish him well in his future endeavors. For the past 5 years Tom has worked as the Veterans' and Military Affairs caseworker for Florida's First Congressional District. He is the ultimate professional, the greatest of friends, and one of the most valuable members of our organization.

Over 100,000 veterans and 18,000 active duty military personnel reside in the district I represent, giving Mr. Connell the heaviest case-load of all our caseworkers. He continuously brings unique and valuable insight into the primary issues faced in the office, drawing from over 30 years of active duty in the U.S. Navy. Entering the service in 1965, he sailed beneath the open seas as a submariner, serving as Chief of the Boat on three different submarines. For the last 5½ years of his duty, Mr. Connell was appointed Fleet Master Chief of CNET, all the while learning and developing the tools he would need to truly become the district's expert on veteran's affairs and military issues.

Kindly referred to as "Father Tom" around the office, he has infinite patience when dealing with the more challenging casework. Regardless, he listens and genuinely tries to resolve their issues as best he can. The phone on his desk never seems to stop ringing and walk-ins have become a part of his daily routine. A gifted public speaker, Mr. Connell has been an outstanding representative at various veterans rallies and numerous events.

Mr. Connell joined the office with considerable experience as a caseworker and was instrumental in getting the office up and running in very short order. A talented and strong leader, Mr. Connell continuously takes the time to train and advise other members of the staff in an effort to make our office the best it can be in representing the people of Northwest Florida.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the month I will lose a great member of my team. Not a day goes by where Tom's tremendous sense of humor does not make us laugh and we will miss his unique capability of never letting us

forget that we work for the greatest government in the world. Respected and admired by us all, I wish Tom nothing but the best as he embarks on his well-earned retirement with his beautiful wife Billie. He will be truly missed. Tom Connell, you are and always will be a reason for our success.

RECOGNITION OF RANCHO BUENA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL BAND AND PAGEANTRY

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2003

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Rancho Buena Vista High School band and pageantry, an award winning group that was selected from a pool of hundreds of high school bands throughout the United States and abroad to participate in the 114th Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California.

Rancho Buena Vista High School located in Vista, California, has developed an instrumental music program that is one of the best in Southern California. The marching band, The Rhythm of the Ranch, and pageantry received top awards in the 2001 competitive season by winning the distinction of Grand Champion at the Etiwanda Field Tournament, Lester Oaks Field Tournament and the Savannah High School Field Tournament. The Rancho Buena Vista Drum Line also won the top award and was named Grand Champion in the spring 2001 Drums Across California Competition.

The Rancho Buena Vista High School band and pageantry was one of only 24 bands chosen to participate in this world famous parade. The Tournament of Roses Parade is seen each New Year's Day by approximately one million spectators, a domestic television audience of 80 million viewers, and an international audience of over 350 million people. The Rhythm of the Ranch band members raised the money to participate in the Rose Bowl Parade through extensive fundraising efforts. One of the marching band and pageantry's proudest accomplishments was being featured in an educational video produced by Warner Brothers Publications that was released and premiered at the school in January 2002. The video, Here Comes the Marching Band, was shown in conjunction with a fundraising dinner and the money raised was used to fund the parade trip and cover the costs of new uniforms and equipment.

Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of the Rancho Buena Vista High School band and pageantry's participation in the Tournament of Roses Parade, I would like to congratulate them for their demonstration of excellence in music and performance. I wish them continued success in the future.